

THE ADVENT

Vol. XVIII No. 3

August, 1961

*A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of
Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future*



Subscription : Inland, Rupees Five; Foreign, Twelve Shillings Six Pence
Inland : Single Copy, Rupee One and Naye Paise Fifty

PUBLICATION OFFICE:— SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM, PONDICHERRY

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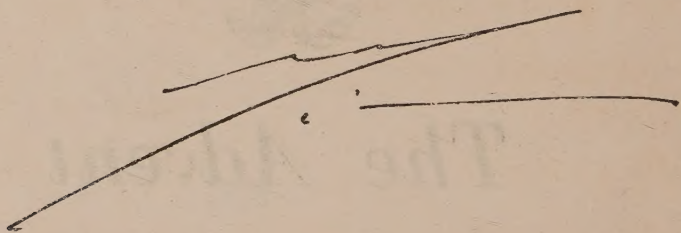
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COMPLIMENTARY



The Advent

He who has crossed the gates
of the true Knowledge has nothing
more to say or to teach



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The ADVENT

August 1951

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Our life is a paradox with God for Key.

SRI AUROBINDO



SRI AUROBINDO'S ROOM



THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves
without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine.
For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss,
the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge,
the seas of Ananda. - - - Sri Aurobindo.

EDITORIALS*

MOTHER'S COMMENTARY

ON THE

DHAMMAPADA

(continued)

I

Many may be the sacred texts he recites, but if, in his delusion, he does not act up to them, then he becomes like a cowherd who counts only others' cattle; he does not share in the holy discipleship. (19)

Very few may be the sacred texts he recites, but if he carries out in practice the Teaching, then abandoning passion and

* Based on the Mother's Talks.

ill-will and delusion, possessing the right knowledge, the consciousness wholly freed, seeking nothing either here or elsewhere, he shares in the holy discipleship. (20)

THE thing has been so often said and repeated that it seems quite unnecessary to insist on the fact that an ounce of practice is infinitely more precious than tons of talk. Surely, all the energy that one spends in explaining a theory would be much better utilised in overcoming in oneself a weakness or a defect.

Therefore to conform to the wisdom of this teaching, we propose to reflect upon the best means of rejecting all passion and ill-will and delusion.

The delusion consists in taking the appearance for the reality and passing things for the only thing worthy to follow, the everlasting Truth.

It is very interesting to observe that the Dhammapada clearly underlines that it does not suffice to be freed from the bonds of this world only but of all the worlds.

For the zealous and true Buddhists tell you that ordinary religions capture you by dangling in front of them the advantages that will accrue to you after death in their Paradise, if you practise their principles. Buddhism on the other hand has neither hell nor heaven. It does not frighten you with eternal punishment nor does it tempt you with celestial felicities.

It is in the pure Truth that you will find your satisfaction and the reward of all your efforts.

II

VIGILANCE

Vigilance is the way to Immortality, Negligence the way to Death. The vigilant never dies; the negligent is already dead. (1)

In the text here the word Nirvana is not used in the sense of annihilation, as you see, but in the sense of an eternal existence in

opposition to life and death as we know them in the present earthly existence, that are contrary to each other, life contrary to death, death contrary to life. It is not *that* life which is spoken of, but the eternal existence which is beyond life and death—the true existence.

Vigilance means to be awake, to be on one's guard, to be sincere—never to be taken by surprise. When you want to do sadhana, at each moment of your life, there is a choice between a step that leads to the goal and falling asleep or sometimes even going backward, saying, "Oh, later on, not immediately"—sitting down on the way.

To be vigilant is not merely to resist that which pulls you downward, but to be awake in order not to lose any occasion to progress, any occasion to overcome a weakness, to resist a temptation, any occasion to learn something, to correct something, to master something. If you are vigilant, you can do in a few days what would otherwise take years. If you are vigilant, you change each circumstance of your life, each action, each movement into an occasion for coming nearer the goal.

There are two kinds of vigilance, active and passive. There is a vigilance that gives you a warning if you are about to make a mistake, if you are going to make a wrong choice, if you are going to be weak or allow yourself to be tempted and there is the active vigilance which seeks an occasion to progress, seeks to utilise every circumstance to advance more quickly.

There is a difference between preventing yourself from falling and advancing more quickly.

And both are absolutely necessary.

He who is not vigilant is already dead. He has lost contact with the true reason for existence, for living.

So hours, circumstances, life pass bringing nothing and you awake from your sleepiness into a hole from where it is difficult to get out.

They know this thoroughly well, the wise in vigilance and they rejoice in their vigilance, ever in the presence of the Great Ones. (2)

Throughout this teaching there is one thing to be noticed; it is this : you are never told that to live well, to think well is the result of a struggle or of a sacrifice; on the contrary it is a delightful state which cures all suffering. At that time, the time of Buddha, to live a spiritual life was a joy, a beatitude, the happiest condition, that which frees you from all troubles of the world, all the sufferings, all the cares, making you happy, satisfied, contented.

It is the materialism of modern times that has made of spiritual effort a painful struggle and a sacrifice, a hard renunciation of all the so-called joys of life.

This insistence on the exclusive reality of the physical world, of physical pleasures, physical joys, physical possessions is the result of the whole materialistic tendency of human civilisation. It was unthinkable in ancient times. On the contrary, withdrawal, concentration, liberation from all material cares, consecration to the spiritual joy, that was indeed the happiness.

From this point of view it is quite evident that humanity is far from having progressed; and those who were born into the world in the centres of materialistic civilisation have in their subconscious this horrid notion that only material realities are real and that to be occupied with things that are not material represents a wonderful spirit of sacrifice, an almost sublime effort. Not to be preoccupied from morning till evening and from evening till morning with all the little physical satisfactions, physical sensations, physical preoccupations is to give evidence of a remarkable spirit. One is not aware of it, but the whole modern civilisation is built on this conception : "Ah, what you touch, that you are sure is true, what you see is surely that which is true, what you eat is surely that which you have eaten, and all the rest—puff ! we are not sure if they are not vain dreams and if we are not giving up the real for the unreal, the game for the shadow. After all, what are you going to gain ? A few dreams ! But when you have solid coins in your pocket, you are sure that you have them there !"

And that, it is everywhere, below everything. Scratch just a little the appearances, it is there, within your consciousness; and

from time to time this thing whispers to you, "Take care, don't be a dupe". It is indeed lamentable.

We have been told that evolution is progressive and that it follows a spiral of ascending progression. I do not doubt that what one calls comfort in modern cities is a much higher degree of evolution than the comfort of the cave-man. But in ancient histories, they always spoke of a power of foresight, of the prophetic spirit, the announcing of future events through visions, life's intimacy with something more subtle that had for the simple people of that epoch a more concrete reality.

Now, in the beautiful cities that are so comfortable, when one wants to condemn anything what does one say?—"It's a dream, it is imagination".

And precisely if a person lives in an inner perception people look at him askance and ask whether he is altogether sane in spirit. One who does not pass his time in amassing money or in increasing his comforts and well-being in securing a good position and becoming an important person, a man who is not like that is mistrusted, yes, people ask whether he is sane in spirit.

And all that is to such an extent the stuff of the atmosphere, the content of the air you breathe, the orientation of the thoughts received from others that it seems absolutely natural. You do not feel that it is a grotesque monstrosity.

To become a little more conscious of oneself, to enter into relation with the life behind the appearances, does not seem to you to be of all wealth the best. When you sit in a comfortable armchair, a well-furnished table in front, when you fill your stomach with delicious dishes, that certainly appears to you much more concrete and much more interesting. And if you look at the day that has passed, at the ledger of the day and if you have had some material advantage, some pleasure, a physical satisfaction you mark it as a good day, but if you had received a good lesson from life, if it had given you a knock on your nose to tell you that you are a stupid fellow, you do not give thanks to the Grace, you say, "Ah, it is not always amusing to live!"

When I read these ancient texts, I have precisely the impression that from the inner point of view, from the point of view

of the true life, we have fallen back terribly and that for the acquisition of a few ingenious mechanisms, a few encouragements to our laziness, the acquisition of instruments and apparatus that economise the effort to live we have renounced the reality of the inner life. It is that sense we have lost and it needs an effort for you to think of learning the sense of life, the essential reason for existence, the goal towards which we must advance, towards which all life advances, whether you want it or not. One step towards the goal, oh ! it needs so much effort to do that ! And generally one thinks of it only when the outer circumstances are not pleasant.

How far are we from the times when the shepherd, who did not go to school and kept watch over his herd at night under the stars, could read in the stars what was going to happen, commune with something which expressed itself through Nature and had the sense of the profound beauty and that peace which a simple life gives !

It is very unfortunate that you have to give up one thing in order to gain another. When I speak of the inner life, I am far from opposing any modern inventions, not at all, but how much have these inventions made us artificial and stupid ! How much have we lost the sense of true beauty, how much are we burdened with useless needs !

Perhaps the time is come to continue the ascent in the curve of the spiral and now with all that this knowledge of matter has brought us, we shall be able to give to our spiritual progress a more solid basis. Strong with what we have learnt of the secrets of Nature, we shall be able to join together the two extreme ends and rediscover the supreme Reality in the very heart of Nature.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

(Contd.)

MOST of the sadhaks have similar thoughts—or had them at one time or another. They rise from the vital ego which either does not want the Divine or wants It for its own purpose and not for the Divine's purpose. It gets furious when it is pressed to change or when its desires are not satisfied—that is at the root of all these things. That is why we insist on surrender in this Yoga—because it is only by the surrender (especially of the vital ego) that these things can go—to accept the Divine for the Divine's sake and for no other motive and in the Divine's way and not in in one's own way or on one's own conditions.

3-5-1933

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**

I am afraid wherever you go there will be difficulties with your state of health—and nerves. There can be no proper provision for chronic illness in an ashram.

9-5-1933

*
**

A lotus signifies the opening of the (true) consciousness.

10-5-1933

*
**

These voices are sometimes one's own mental formations, sometimes suggestions from outside. Good or bad depends on what they say and on the quarter from which they come.

14-5-1933

*
**

(Animals seen in dream)

These things are always symbols of forces on the vital plane. Whatever they may be one has only to remember the Mother and call her.

6-7-1933

*
**

The Force can descend wherever you are open to it apart from any such circumstance.

24-7-1933

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**

(Q : Is it not dangerous to sympathise with anyone gone wrong ?)

Yes, it is dangerous, because it puts one in touch with the adverse Force that upset him and that Force at once tries to touch you and make its suggestions and contaminate by a sort of contagion or infection.

30-8-1933

*
**

(Q : What really makes one fit for Yoga or unfit ?)

It is difficult to say that any particular quality makes one fit or the lack of it unfit. One may have strong sex-impulses, doubts, revolts and yet succeed in the end, while another may fail. If one has a fundamental sincerity, a will to go through in spite of all things and readiness to be candid, that is the best security in the sadhana.

30-8-1933

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**

Dark horse—means a horse whose qualities are unknown whether it is good or bad, will win the race or lose it—an obscure and unknown factor.

2-9-1933

*
**

(The play of undivine forces)

If you get rid of the conscious consent, the unconscious reaction of the forces will in time disappear.

12-9-1933

*
**

(Q : How can one supersede the ego ?)

It is the psychic inmost being that replaces the ego. It is through love and surrender to the Divine that the psychic being becomes strong and manifest so that it can replace the ego.

12-9-1933

*
**

I don't know why you should get so much depressed about such a trifle. It is only your Yoga that is of importance, not a pastime like that.

17-9-1933

*
**

There are two attitudes that a sadhak can have : either a quiet equality to all regardless of their friendliness or hostility or a general good will.

10-10-1933

*
**

The usual absurdity of inferring that Mother thinks this and feels that as if she were acting from ordinary motives and you could judge her from your selves.

13-11-1933

*
**

It is the spirit and the consciousness from which it is done that makes an action yogic—it is not the action itself.

27-11-1933

*
**

You seem to be attaching too much importance to dreams. Keep your waking mind and vital free—you can deal afterwards with the dreams which will then be only memories from the subconscious.

29-11-1933

*
**

“Let all my movements, inner and outer, be guided by you and for you with integral sincerity, simplicity and give me the true, unegoistic attitude.”

If you can get that attitude and keep it, then the illness too would recede, for nervous weakness would disappear and the body become open to the Force.

6-12-1933

*
**

The ‘Prayers’ ought not to be given to any one who is not practising yoga. The ‘Conversations’ are for those who are interested in yoga.

8-12-1933

*
**

(I dreamt that I was playing with a child ; if the child is my psychic being, who am I that dreams of playing with the child?)

Some other part of the being—mental, vital or subtle physical—whichever you are identified with at the time.

11-12-1933

*
**

I cannot say either that he is really sincere to yoga—if he were he would not be marrying this woman—or that there is no possibility of his ever taking to it ; there is hardly any one of whom that can be said. The probability of the spiritual call

is always there in everybody, because in everybody there is a psychic being, but at present *time* far off from any real entering into the path.

11-1-1934

*
**

Poetic genius—without which there cannot be any originality—is born, but it takes time to come out ; the first work even of great poets is often not original. That is in ordinary life. In yoga poetic originality can come by an opening from within, even if it was not there before in such a way as to be available in this life.

22-3-1934

*
**

The world is the form, the reality is the Divine. One must see the presence in the form.

1-4-1934 (?)

*
**

(*Nature and sex-act*)

The method she has chosen is not very becoming—but in ordinary life it is accepted for its purpose under much cover and concealment ; in spiritual life it has to be overcome.

2-5-1934

*
**

(*How can one conquer greed—for anything?*)

By rejecting and by the descent of a higher consciousness.

10-5-1934

*
**

Well, if you start that (yielding to temptations), you can say good-bye to any hope of progress in sadhana.

12-5-1934

*
**

Writing and reading absorb the mind and fill it with images and influences ; if the images and influences are not of the right kind, they naturally turn away from the true consciousness. It is only if one has the true consciousness well established already that one can read or write anything whatever without losing it or without any other harm.

17-5-1934

*
**

You have to throw it (sex, worry and trouble) out of the physical or at least the waking physical. Dreams would then matter less and would be more easily dealt with.

17-5-1934

*
**

There are a number of women who can love with the mind, the psychic, the vital (heart), but they shrink from a touch on the body and even when that goes, the physical act remains abhorrent to them. They may yield, under pressure, but it does not reconcile them (with) the act which always seems to them animal and degrading. Women know this, but men seem to find it hard to believe it, but it is perfectly true.

19-6-1934

*
**

“To retire from everything does not help in this sadhana.”

Not always—except that to have no contact with people and shut himself up entirely is not healthy. But one can for a time diminish outward activity so as to concentrate.

To be too sensitive and upset by any contact is excessive ; but to have too many contacts and be always dispersing oneself prevents the sadhana from growing and solidifying in the inner being, since one is always being pulled out into the ordinary outer consciousness.

21-6-1934

*
**

Abnormal is a word which you can stick on anything that is not quite common, cheap and ordinary. In that way genius is abnormal, so is spirituality, so is the attempt to live by high ideals. The tendency to physical chastity in women is not abnormal, it is fairly common and includes a very high feminine type.

The mind is the seat of thought and perception, the heart is the seat of love, the vital of desire—but how does that prevent the existence of mental love ? The mind can be invaded by the feelings of the emotional or the vital, or the heart too can be dominated by the mind and moved by mental forces.

There is a vital love, a physical love. It is possible for the vital to desire a woman for various vital reasons without love—in order to satisfy the instinct of domination or possession, in order to draw in the vital forces of a woman¹ so as to feed one's own vital or for the exchange of vital forces, to satisfy vanity, the hunter's instinct of the chase etc. This is often called love, but it is only vital desire, a kind of lust. If however the emotions of the heart are awakened then it becomes vital love ; a mixed affair with any or all of these vital motives strong, but still vital love.

There may too be a physical love, the attraction of beauty, the physical sex-appeal or anything else of the kind awakening the emotions of the heart. If that does not happen then the physical need is all and that is sheer lust, nothing more. But physical love is possible.

In the same way there can be a mental love. It comes from the attempt to find one's ideal in another or from some strong

¹ This is from the man's viewpoint, but the woman also has her vital motives,

mental passion of adoration and wonder or from the mind's seeking for a concrete, a complement and fulfiller of one's nature, a *sahadharminī*, a guide and helper, a leader and master or from a hundred other mental motives. By itself that does not amount to love, though often it is so ardent as to be hardly distinguishable from it and may even turn to sacrifice of life, entire self-giving, etc. etc. But when it awakens the emotions of the heart, then it may lead to a very powerful love which is yet mental in its root and dominant character. Ordinarily however it is the mind and vital together which combine ; but this combination can exist along with a disinclination or positive dislike for the physical act and its accompaniments. No doubt if the man presses, the woman is likely to yield, but it is a *contre-cœur*, as they say, against her feelings and her deepest instincts.

It is an ignorant psychology that reduces everything to the sex motive and the sex impulse.

21-6-1934

SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE NEW AGE

CHAPTER III

THE PROTESTANT REVOLUTION

LUTHER AND CALVIN

“The one thing that is of interest in the Reformation is Luther’s character : indeed, it was the one thing that really impressed the masses. All else is a muddle and confusion, from which we suffer daily.”—Goethe.

WE have seen that behind the glittering pageant of the Renaissance and the swift transitions of the thought and life of the West, it was man’s Reason that stood as the protagonist in the universal drama of evolution. Was it to continue in its blind loyalty to the spectre of God perceived through the haze of a faith that brought no delivering light, or forswear God, break with faith, and woo Matter, which attracted it with its appearance of concrete, tangible, indubitable reality ?—this was the problem at the very heart of the epochal mutations of the age. It was essentially a spiritual problem, involving a crucial stage in the evolution of the cultural life of humanity. The Renaissance recovered the joy and beauty of life, its freedom to expand and create, its love of nature and its curiosity to know her, to worm into her heart, and wrest her secret, so that earth could again be a happy place to live in. It was an age in which the plaintive cry of abandoned Earth echoed in the soul of man, and his Reason, freed from age-old fetters, turned to her to dispel her gloom, to heal her wounds, and to reinstate her in her rightful glory. The Renaissance, in rejecting God and the supernatural, unwittingly set about preparing the field for their manifestation in the material world.

The Renaissance saw Reason sever itself from the Spirit and set off to court Matter. From this union was born the bright-eyes Humanism, inheriting Individualism and Secularism from its parents. And this double endowment sums up the whole history of the aspirations and achievements of the modern age. Nationalism, religious reform, rationalistic and empirical Science, Capitalism, Democracy, Socialism, and even the pampered Technology—all these characteristic components of modern civilisation sprang in inevitable sequence from the historic alliance of Reason and Matter.

But, as I have said before, a sudden nostalgic impulse made Reason hark back to faith and the Spirit—not to the spectre of the Spirit, but to the Spirit itself in its incorruptible substance—and halt and hesitate for a brief, pregnant spell before casting in its lot with Matter for many a long summer of vigorous, creative life. The Protestant Revolt was the outcome of this momentary nostalgic impulse.

This return of Reason to faith was rehearsed first in the soul of Luther. A seething, universal discontent with the sham religion of the times found an impetuous channel in him. The closing phase of the Conventional Age had completed the petrification of Christianity. The Roman papacy had become an inert octopus stifling the spiritual freedom of man. Even a great portion of the clergy were smarting under the abuses of the Church and panting for reform. "The tendency of the conventional age of society is to fix, to arrange firmly, to formalise, to erect a system of rigid grades and hierarchies, to stereotype religion, to bind education and training to a traditional and unchangeable form, to subject thought to infallible authorities, to cast a stamp of finality on what seems to it the finished life of man. The conventional period of society has its golden age when the spirit and thought that inspired its forms are confined but yet living, not yet altogether walled in, not yet stifled to death and petrified by the growing hardness of the structure in which they are encased. That golden age is often very beautiful and attractive to the distant view of posterity by its precise order, symmetry, fine social architecture, the admirable subordination

of its parts to a general and noble plan. Thus at one time the modern litterateur, artist or thinker looked back often with admiration and with something like longing to the mediaeval age of Europe; he forgot in its distant appearance of poetry, nobility, spirituality the much folly, ignorance, iniquity, cruelty and oppression of those harsh ages, the suffering and revolt that simmered below these fine surfaces, the misery and squalor that was hidden behind that splendid façade.¹ Luther's revolt was stimulated and supported by the groundswell of a universal discontent and resentment.

But the epoch of the Lutheran revolt was not the golden age of the Conventional period, but, from the spiritual standpoint, a most dismal and sterilising time. The Renaissance had generated an impatience of all discipline and restraint, a great laxity in morals, and an exuberant spirit of worldliness or secularism; and these had their share in encouraging and increasing the corruption of the Church. The Church had almost relinquished its spiritual function; it had become an international superstate with all the prodigious powers of a secular state, and with the additional advantage of the traditional, unchallenged religious authority. It was time this religious perversion was stamped out, the decay of the most vital element of human culture arrested. It was time to restore man to the freedom and dignity of his spiritual individuality. And Luther was chosen as the instrument of the catharsis, the scourge of the Time-Spirit.

In Luther there was a significant tangle of conflicting elements. There was in him an intense, individualistic urge to probe the truth of religion for himself, unaided by any external agency. There was a strong dash of democracy which led him to preach the equalitarian principle in religion by doing away with all distinction between a priest and a layman.² There was an equally pronounced secular spirit, which made him reject ascetic monasticism and declare that celibacy was not incumbent on the clergy, and that all human life and its activities are a divine service, and

¹ *The Human Cycle* by Sri Aurobindo, Chapter I.

² "Every man his own priest"—Luther.

not only the sacraments performed by the priests. His individualistic spirit allied itself to the spirit of nationalism which had already been gathering force, and issued in his siding with the princes of Germany against the papal authority of Rome. And all these he had imbibed from the Renaissance. But these were more than counterbalanced by the instincts and tendencies he had inherited from the Mediaeval Age. In fact, he was more mediaeval than modern. Moulded by the teachings of St. Augustine and influenced by the Epistles of St. Paul, both of whom had preached the doctrine of the justification by faith¹ and repudiated that of salvation by good works, prescribed by the Church, Luther went even beyond the Middle Ages to the Hebraic form of Christianity. He accepted the Bible as the supreme revelation of God, the infallible Word, and rejected the claim of the Church to be its sole accredited vehicle. He believed in the supernatural world and the doctrine of heaven and hell. To him the horrors of hell and the dangers of damnation were as real as to the mediaeval clergy. He believed in the original sin, the total depravity of man,—so much emphasised by St. Augustine and St. Paul—predestination, and the salvation of the elect.² It is curious that his God of Grace, instead of being a God of love and beauty and sweetness,³ partakes rather of the nature of the Mosaic Jehovah, the supreme “Judge who acquits, not a loving Father who forgives.” Calvin, as we shall see later, went even farther, and invested his God with all the awesome attributes of the grim-eyed, thunder-dealing God of the Jews. Luther hated Reason and called it “the devil’s harlot” though his individualistic approach to religion was inspired by his ethical instinct and reason. In fact, the very individualism of his creed was derived from the rationalism of the Renaissance. He distrusted

¹ “....Any man may clearly see how a Christian man is free from all things, that he needs no works in order to be justified and saved, but receives these gifts in abundance from his faith alone”.—Luther

² One wonders why the God of grace and mercy should effect the salvation only of the few elect and doom all the rest of humanity to eternal damnation. “This is the highest degree of faith—to believe that he is merciful, who saves so few and damns so many...”—Luther.

³ As it is in the Vaishnavic school of Hinduism.

Science, and denounced the Copernican astronomy as being contrary to the Scripture. He was no lover of art, though he had a soft corner for music.

Luther thus stands straddling a watershed in history. He had in him strong tendencies and influences of the past, the essential urge of the present, and the germinating seeds of the future. His nature and temperament were made up of contrary elements—they were full of paradoxes and anomalies. And it is this complex of paradoxes in his nature that fitted him for his role as the detonator of a mighty revolution, the representative and mouth-piece of his age. All inaugurators of a new age or a new revolution are always paradoxical in their character and action because of a singular intermingling of the past, present and future in the very fibre of their being. Their lives prove, to the embarrassment of the analytical historian, that historical evolution is a complex indivisible continuum, and that past, present, and future are a single stream of time flowing towards the ocean of eternity.¹ It is their lives that furnish the true perspective to the synthetic historical vision. But for Luther, the Individualism that was born in the Renaissance, would have culminated in the civilised barbarism of the material man, content to wallow in sense-pleasures and dead for ever to any sense of a higher destiny. But for him, there would have been no Age of Subjectivism, following in the wake of the Age of Individualism, to rouse mankind, through the sharp agony of inner conflict and bleak despair, into the vision of a new life, and beckon him away from the smoking wreckage of the present to the adventure of a new world of unity and harmony, an unprecedented cultural and social order of creative and collective fulfilment.

Though inspired by reason, Protestantism was not so much a revolt of reason as of the "moral instinct and the ethical need." It was a retreat of reason for a short while into the fuzziness of mediaeval faith and the frozen dogmas of the patristic culture of the conventional age in order to search for the immortal treasures that lay buried in them. It was an exploration of a waste land

¹ cf. Plato's "Time is the moving image of Eternity",

and the discovery of some ancient relics, some vital elements of religion, without which man would have sunk irretrievably into the backwaters of his ancestral animality.

“One of the most fundamental requisites for the search of the Truth is a critical reason, almost a cynical mind which tears off the mask and refuses to accept current ideas, thoughts and opinions. It is a kind of solvent. Man must have the courage to see the Truth as it is without any deception about it.”¹ But Luther did not possess this critical mind. His was an instinctive, intuitive, and impulsive mind, just what was needed at that moment to initiate and advance the Protestant revolt. If the critical mind had acted in him, his movement would have been in the line of the well-knit mystical philosophy of Eckhart, who was his contemporary, and the history of Europe would have turned in an altogether different direction. Or, it would have been something like the uncompromising radicalism of the Anabaptists. But that was not to be. Religion had to shed its mystical and spiritual, its supernatural and metaphysical strain, and remain tethered to mental ethics. And Reason had to concentrate on Matter and subserve its evolutionary ends. Matter, redeemed from its aeonic darkness, had, in the fullness of time, to become a transparent vesture of the Spirit.

(to be continued)

RISHABHCHAND

¹ Sri Aurobindo in the *Evening Talks* by A. B. Purani—Second Series,

THE SELF'S INFINITY

(*Sri Aurobindo's sonnet included in his "Last Poems"*)

THE poises of the soul in man in the scale of existence and ladder of consciousness are indeed manifold. There is the poise which is no poise of the majority of mortals who are imprisoned in their small selves which have neither a stable foothold in the whirlwind of Time nor the capacity of identification with the movement in a total abandon as of a leaf. Mixing memory and desire, getting more and more entrenched in oneself in every relationship and experience conducted either in a state of restless raging fever or in a mood of indifference and inertia and therefore increasing the boredom and horror of life, man makes his consciousness a waste land which is barren of love from within or the rain of grace from above. But a moment comes when the very intensity of the agony of the cramping finiteness and coagulation of the life-force in the land brings about the death of or at least a release from the ego and therefore a new birth of consciousness. And so we have the several orientations in identification with Material, Vital, Mental, Higher Mental and Supramental Consciousness. The materialised soul, Annamaya Puruṣha, can feel the inconscient Infinite in Matter and lead a life in unison with it, canalising the resources of the vital and mental faculties to this end and at the termination of corporeal life return to the vast indeterminateness of the Infinite. The Vital soul, Pranamaya Puruṣha, may realise and lead a similar life and merge with the Infinite in the Vital and so can the mental soul, Manomaya Puruṣha, with the Infinite in the mental. Similar organisations of the soul are possible in the planes of Higher Thinking Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition and Overmind. Each plane has its own Time and Space and the soul there, lives, moves and has its being in the corresponding Time and Space. And in each plane all things and persons and

events can be realised as existing in the Infinite and as becomings of the Infinite there. The infinity of each plane partakes of the essential nature of that region of consciousness such as the inconscience of Matter, the puissance and mobility of Life, the balanced ratiocinative thought of Mind, the 'clarified spiritual intelligence and tranquil day-light' of Higher Thinking Mind, the spiritual light and visionary splendour of Illumined Mind, the 'stable lightnings' of Intuition and the cosmic and global awareness of the Overmind. The higher one ascends, the more refined, flexible and inclusive do Time and Space become so that the overmental soul can see each in relationship with every other and in the All and as the frontal manifestation of the All and originating all the powers of the planes below, containing their essence in the highest state of intensity.

Behind and beyond all these planes is Sachchidananda, Existence-Consciousness-Delight where Time has a stop or rather there is no time or space or the need for either for this is a plane above all self-extension in status or movement, a state of self-existent, self-luminous Being. The soul can realise this Divine Ground of all Being in two modes. It can either merge itself with That beyond all manifestation in a static self-gathered consciousness or realise That in Its creative dynamic state, the plane of the Supermind which is the source of all, in all the worlds below, and their fulfilment. The first mode gives indeed a total liberation in the Infinity of the static Brahman, but it is the second which gives fulfilment and holds the Timeless and Time in one single embrace. Each poise of the soul is called a self and the moment the ego or the small self is overpassed, the self in each plane shares the infinity of that plane till in the overmental level it has the experience of a global infinity of all the dynamic planes or worlds below. The Overmental Self has the awareness of the Infinity in all time and space schemes. The Self merged in static Sachchidananda has the consciousness of the Infinity of the timeless and spaceless unmanifest. But the Supramental Self, Vijnanamaya Purusha, has the perception and realisation of the Infinity of Time and Timelessness, the Manifest and the Unmanifest simultaneously. So it is called *The Self*, of all the

selves the most inclusive and comprehensive. Sri Aurobindo's sonnet, *The Self's Infinity*, embodies the realisation of the Self as Sachchidananda in the Supramental plane, the most integral poise of the soul in man enveloping the two poles of existence—the Superconscient in the realms of Knowledge above and the Inconscient in the realms of Ignorance below. It is a state when man's consciousness has become a 'house-room for the glory and immense felicity of a white Infinity', 'beautiful and bare for the Immortal's dance'.

II

The Timeless is the origin of all Time, Eternity the source of all Hours. Each soul is a spark, an eternal portion of the Eternal, *amśa sanātana*, projected into the scheme of Time for its redemption, by progressive growth and becoming of the Supramental Purusha which it was before birth in Time. The soul of the Purna Yogi has realised and identified itself with its divine origin, the Supramental Vijnanamaya Purusha.

I have become what before Time I was.

A secret touch has quieted thought and sense :

All things by the agent Mind created pass

Into a void and mute magnificence.

The delegate sent into the world of mind and life rooted in the Inconscient has embraced them, even got itself involved in them and with their time-bound awareness has slowly and progressively heightened its status through the physical, vital, mental and Higher mental planes of higher and subtler gradations of time and finally come back to Vijnanaloka. The Timeless is therefore joined with Time and the instruments moulded in Time out of the inconscient foundation. This becoming or realising with the time-consciousness and in it of its timeless nature and thus bridging the gulf between the Infinite and the Finite is the sole function of the soul in man. The Psychic being, Chaitya Purusha, indwelling and carrying the mind, vital and physical, integrating

and suffusing them with its essential quality, has opened itself to the Supramental Purusha and identified itself with That and so has yoked the triple body with the Supramental. The first result of this contact with Vijnana is the descent of the Highest Peace which brings about a complete receptive silence in the thinking and the feeling parts of the outer being, thought and sense. This falling quiet in all the layers with absoluteness is the natural and immediate response to even the slightest impact, touch, of the Higher Consciousness. Only the Supramental can achieve this miracle of tranquillising all thought and feeling by its magic touch because It has what they seek and they have realised that what is now needed is only a wide and passive and alert opening or surrender to the fulfilling influence of Vijnana. This touch is felt by them not from without or in their own dimension but from behind through the Subliminal and the Psychic and therefore secret to them, hidden deep within, not realised by the externalising consciousness. Again the moment (and the manner) of influence or contact of the Supramental is unexpected and unpredictable and beyond Time and therefore appears a stealthy inroad or surprise, a secret touch. The nature of the touch is an individually unique experience which can at best be said to be similar to others' but never identical and therefore must remain a secret with every individual. For the Divine responds to the Human according to the very special relationship, secret and sacred, formed with each. This is also an essentially profound supramental feeling which has never been and can never be completely embodied in mental language and therefore is a secret which will always be a secret even when explained. The effect of the touch is a silence which is always present and perfect in the members of the being. It brings to an end, puts an effective and permanent stop to all thinkings and feelings, knowings and enjoyings, thought and sense. The Yogi passes beyond all knowings, all strivings after knowledge by separative contact with the object and therefore becomes ready for Knowledge based on complete identity. He passes beyond all partial feelings of the surfaces of things and events born of incomplete union with these, and therefore becomes ready for Bliss and Love based on union with the Essence

of all. All the formulating and therefore delimiting mechanism, the abstracting and externalising machinery—thought—has fallen silent. This awakens the power of Truth-Vision, the perception of the whole cosmic movement as having its origin, existence and return, in the Divine Supermind. All the hitherto manifested worlds are not the direct creations of the Supramental Truth-Consciousness but those of the Mind with its several gradations like the Overmind, Intuition, Illumined Mind, Higher Thinking Mind and Mind. But Mind is no independent reality but a delegate of the Supramental, deriving all its power from That though modifying it to suit the needs and conditions in each space-time scheme. It is a faithful agent of its Master, the Divine Supramental Lord and prepares each of the worlds for His Advent in them by progressively pouring his powers into them. Thus the highest of these, the Overmind which presides over all its other powers, has evolved the great Gods and Goddesses who stand in front and manage the government of the universe. But the Supermind is not merely beyond the created worlds and things in them. It is behind all and supporting all, not of course evolved here but always involved in them. The Yogi who has received the touch of the Supermind becomes aware of That behind all things, and all things emerge and return, pass, into That. It is felt as a Void, an Infinite Zero which is the beginning and end of the whole manifestation. It has none of the categories of the Mind in It and so It is a void, empty of all known content. It has endless, infinite depths or levels in It and therefore appears a bottomless void, a huge abyss, the Alpha and Omega. All Its powers and dynamisms are so completely united and held together in a vast, massed concentrated Consciousness, Prajnana Ghana, that It is felt as mute, so completely and masterly silent and self-gathered, that there is no need for exhibition or going out. Not all attempts at provoking It or reaching It by the most arduous Tapasya or energising of Mental Consciousness can evoke any response from It and so It is mute. One can only wait in an absolutely passive surrendered state of aspiration for the advent of That Magnificence, the Infinite Display of Greatness of Truth, Light, Power, Love and Ananda beyond all greatnesses in the realms of the Mind.

III

Perception leads to and culminates in Realisation, Manana in Nididhyasana. The vision of the Supramental Silence as the fountain and receiving ocean of all streams of the waters of life and movement in the world, is felt in the blood and along the heart so that the life of the Yogi, hitherto a plaything of all the strife and noise of the agent Mind, now becomes a playground for that mute magnificence.

My life is a silence grasped by timeless hands;
The world is drowned in an immortal gaze.
Naked my spirit from its vestures stands;
I am alone with my own self for space.

Life is no longer subject to the mutations of time or the limitations of space. The monstrous grip and iron hold or heavy clutch of the hands of time which made life a tangled web with tortuous knots give place to the grasp by timeless hands. Grasp and not grip, secure and intense possession without the possessiveness and oppressive tyranny so characteristic of finite time. An intimate, all inclusive embrace, enveloping completely and interpenetrating and suffusing with its infinity the object held within grasp. Life is permeated by the Supramental Silence and its law of being has become one law with That, Samanadharma. This is not only a state of negation or absence of all the characteristic activity or movement of finite time with its play of the three gunas of relative calmness or sattwa, feverish restlessness or rajas and inert automatism or tamas, but a positive condition of intense Spiritual Peace. Life has not only fallen silent; it has become a silence. Nay, intense becoming has resulted in being. Life *is* a silence enveloped and permeated by the Infinite. The purveyor or the deploying agency of a limited measure of energy or impulsion of finite Nature, life, is no longer there. We have instead the passive vehicle and completely consecrated vessel of the All-Puissant and therefore All-Silent Supernature. The centre of gravity is shifted from the Inconscient to the Superconscient, from Time to the

Timeless, from mortality to Immortality. All individual movements and the totality of such finite cyclic motions—the world—are realised as waves in the vast ocean of the Infinite Consciousness. The world which appeared as a gigantic structure to the limited mental consciousness is now seen to be engulfed by the Waters of the Infinite and Timeless Superconscience. In fact, all finites are seen as the frontal manifestations of the Infinite and so in the integral vision infinite and immortal. The consciousness of the world as a self-contained, finite movement is drowned in the Cosmic and Transcendental Vision—the immortal gaze. To the immortal gaze the world is Brahman. *Sarvam khalvidam brahma Vāsudevaḥ sarvam*. This immortal gaze and the consequent realisation of the gaze of the Immortal Infinite on all, is the reward of the achievement of immortality by the spirit in man. The soul in man has now become the Vijnanamaya Purusha by transcending the mental, vital and physical sheaths or vestures, conditioning and delimiting and cramping agencies which clothed the essentially free and immortal spirit with the robes of mortality. The spirit stands in all its naked glory of infinity and immortality, a state of conscious attunement and living in the Divine Ground of Sachchidananda in the plane of Supermind. Only now can the spirit in man be said to stand in the scheme of things as a free citizen of the world with an erect and imposing stature ready to play his individually unique part in the drama of the Infinite with the Finite. For hitherto he was cribbed, cabined and confined in his sheaths, more acted upon than acting, a puppet driven by universal forces and sometimes even a crawling worm which could be crushed by the ruthless tread of overwhelming powers of Ignorance. There is no longer the separation of the individual from his environment, the division of the world into the two often opposing and at best cooperating and even so remaining inveterately separate groups of the self and the not-self. There is only One Self and no other self or the possibility of it. Each is the All and the All is in each and even this manner of speech talking of the two as though different, loses all meaning or relevance. There is only the One Self, alone in its immensity and wideness. All space is transcended in the Spiritual Infinity. 'Space is Brahman

extended for the holding together of forms and objects; Time is Brahman self-extended for the deployment of the movement of self-power carrying forms and objects'. When one lives in Brahman by becoming the Supramental Purusha the Space is the Spiritual Infinite Consciousness which is one's own self without another and therefore alone.

IV

This stable dwelling in the Infinite Consciousness, *brāhmī sthiti*, in complete wakeful awareness makes the realisation inclusive of Timelessness and Time, Unity and Multiplicity, Knowledge and Ignorance, Vidya and Avidya, Non-Birth and Birth, Asambhuti and Sambhuti, Superconscience and Inconscience. The heart, body and even all the bottomless depths of being below them, the subconscious and the inconscient now live, move and have their being in the Infinite. They become manifesting instruments of the Supramental Sachchidananda.

My heart is a centre of infinity,
 My body a dot in the soul's vast expanse.
 All being's huge abyss wakes under me,
 Once screened in a gigantic Ignorance.

The heart was, while in Ignorance, the seat of Emotions or finite quanta of the Energy of Love conditioned and often perverted by the limited power of extension of consciousness of the soul, directed towards in sympathy or away in aversion or kept static in indifference, a superficial response to the surface of things and persons. Now it is the focal point of the unlimited consciousness of the Infinite Purusha who has no sympathy or antipathy but an all-embracing divine compassion and love for all. It goes on radiating the infinity of Love to all objects and persons, endlessly, spontaneously and absolutely with a boundless capacity for self-giving, aiming solely at tasting the joy of union of Essential Consciousness. For the heart is not only the seat of Love but also of Delight and Beauty. Now it has become wide enough to

receive and pour out the infinity of self-existent Delight and All-Pervading Beauty of the Vijnanamaya Purusha. In fact, the Infinite Consciousness holds the individual heart and body in its bosom. The body was in the life of the Ignorance a big, cumbrous and heavy machinery, a dead weight carried only with difficulty and felt very often, because of its inherent quality of almost insurmountable inertia, as the enemy of all higher values and aspirations. While in the grip of its unique material consciousness, the soul and all higher faculties appear as being contained by it and securely imprisoned within. Mind, heart, life and the whole range of the subliminal and psychic and even the spiritual seem to be buried within its impenetrable walls, to such an extent indeed that the majority of men with the physical mind orientation deny the very existence of these greater verities and depths of being. Now the body is seen to be in the large and all-pervasive consciousness of the soul, its vast expanse, as an almost insignificant point in the infinite dimension of the soul. The Spiritual consciousness of the Supermind gives matter its proper and true place in the scheme of things, not looming large and dominating the consciousness completely as with the materialistic scientific mind, not also vanishing into nothing as with the spiritualised ascetic mind, but serving as a minor note in a major harmony, a dot in a large space forming part and parcel of it, accepted and accepting. Matter is in Spirit, not Spirit in Matter. Nay, Matter is only one of the many poises or the crystallisations of the Spirit's Infinite Consciousness, just as a dot is only an extremely delicate and minute crystallisation of Space. This perception of the two poles of life, Spirit and Matter, not as irreconcilable opposites but the same essential Sachchidananda is the unique outlook of the Supramental Purusha and His awareness. For the Supermind is the creative consciousness of Sachchidananda and the truth of all created things and levels of consciousness stands self-revealed to its all-comprehending gaze. The regions of existence below Matter are so completely sealed from the view of the mental, vital and physical consciousness that matter is often declared by them to be the basic bedrock of all existence. The higher mental vision, ranging from the Thinking Mind to the Overmental

often feels this region to be a huge abyss, a bottomless subterranean world which one dreams of entering, leave alone sounding, only at the peril of being swallowed into non-existence. The abyss remains unexplored but threatening always and effectively thwarting all attempts of Spiritual explorers and warriors to deal with matter. It is hidden completely, screened from the consciousness of the mortals and even the gods. It is itself a zone of overwhelming and even all-powerful oblivion of all consciousness or even the possibility of it, a gigantic Ignorance. It is a power of nescience and Inconscience, an absolute Darkness, *atala pātāla*. Now this abyss wakes under the gaze of the Supramental Purusha who sees the very Supermind involved in even the cavernous depths of the Inconscient. Even the subconscious and the inconscient are only the poises of the Infinite Divine Consciousness. The consciousness slumbering in this nether pole of existence responds to the Supramental and so the huge abyss wakes after aeons of torpor.

V

The gnostic individual is the consummation of the spiritual man. He is "in the world and of the world, but also exceeds it in his consciousness and lives in his self of transcendence above it; he is universal but free in the universe, individual but not limited by a separative individuality. The true Person is not an isolated entity, his individuality is universal; for he individualises the universe : it is at the same time divinely emergent in a spiritual air of transcendental infinity, like a high cloud-surpassing summit; for he individualises the divine Transcendence. All beings are to him his own selves, all ways and powers of consciousness are felt as the ways and powers of his own universality." He is the Timeless Self extending and embracing and interpenetrating all Time and all Space.

A momentless immensity pure and bare,
I stretch to an eternal everywhere,

He is one with the Transcendent in the realm of timeless eternity with Its endless infinite planes above planes of luminous Consciousness with infinities of Truth, Light, Power, Beauty and Ananda where Time is not, and so he is a momentless immensity. He is free from the taint of personality, pure and absolutely devoid of the mask of individuality, naked and bare, transparently sincere, open and spontaneous, always and in all levels of his being. "We feel ourselves in presence of a light of consciousness, a potency, a sea of energy, can distinguish and describe its free waves of action and quality, but not fix itself; and yet there is an impression of personality, the presence of a powerful being, a strong, high or beautiful recognisable Someone, a Person, not a limited creature of Nature but a Self or Soul, a Purusha. He is such an inner Person unveiled, occupying both the depths—no longer self-hidden—and the surface in a unified self-awareness; he is not a surface personality partly expressive of a larger secret being, he is not the wave but the ocean; he is the Purusha, the inner conscious Existence self-revealed, and has no need of a carved expressive mask or persona." "He is an infinite and universal being revealing its eternal self through the significant form and expressive power of an individual and temporal self-manifestation." His consciousness reaches out and pervades, stretches in all Space-Time dimensions from the Overmental zenith down to the Inconscient nadir and embraces the eternal in all these planes, an eternal everywhere. Time eternity and Timeless eternity, the Superconscious and the Inconscient are embraced as One Supreme Reality. He 'holds infinity in the palm of his hand and Eternity in an hour'. His palm is in Infinity; his hour in Eternity. He is one with the Self and Its Infinity, *akhaṇḍākāra parātpara puruṣa*.

M. V. SEETARAMAN

THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER

EDUCATION

XI

THE charitable catholicity, the sweet reasonableness, the generous solicitude to appreciate and value the thoughts and feelings of others as well as we do ours, and a limpid plasticity in the mind, forbidding all exclusive attachment to our own viewpoints and making us accept those of others, if they appear to our calm judgment as better and wiser, are some of the most useful elements of the training of the mind. But it goes without saying that this mental training depends to a very large extent on the training of the vital or *prāṇa*, which is, in its unredeemed state, a seed-bed of the mean selfishnesses, obstinacies, narrow attachments, blind fanaticisms and unbridled passions, which create division and discord within ourselves and in our dealings with others. This unlit and unquiet *prāṇa* has to be enlightened and quietened, not only for its own sake, for the sake of its own release into a more pellucid atmosphere of selfless and joyous creative action, but for the freedom and enlightenment of the mind itself, which will enable it to transcend and perfect its present natural working. "The vital being in us is the seat of impulses and desires, of enthusiasm and violence, of dynamic energy and desperate depression, of passions and revolt. It can set in motion everything, build up and realise, it can also destroy and mar everything." The vital or *prāṇa* is, in fact, not only a cockpit of cravings and passions, but of the effectuating force and the realising power, and without it nothing can be achieved in life. A radiant vital, calm and masterful, buoyant and happy, full of enthusiasm and fervour, and strong enough to face difficulties with a serene smile, is an indispensable instrument of creative perfection in life. Ascetic disciplines, stemming from a partial and imperfect view

of the vital, and regarding it as the source of most struggles and suffering, strive to mortify it and coerce it into stillness, and even to repress and atrophy many of its sterling faculties. But that is a senseless torture inflicted upon the Divine Presence within us, as the Gita characterises it. And besides, it is a blind evasion of a difficulty—a difficulty, which is, in fact, fraught with incalculable possibilities of conquest and mastery. To run away from a difficulty is to lose an opportunity. It is much easier to kill a wild horse than to train it to efficiency. What is needed for a harmonious development of all the powers and faculties of the vital is an organisation and integration of them all, a gathering together and fusion of their dissipating energies into a single current of force, capable of carrying out, without flinching and faltering, the will of the central being. As in all kinds of psychological organisation, so here, in the case of the vital, sincerity and patience are the first requisites, for, “without sincerity one will deceive oneself from the first step, and all endeavour for progress will go in vain.” The vital is full of ruses and subterfuges, and unless one is absolutely loyal to the divine aim of one’s life, and firm in one’s resolve to give no quarter to personal ambition or desires, one is liable to be entrapped and tossed about by its obscure forces.

The discipline of the vital was an integral part of the ancient system of education in India; for, the ancients had a complete grasp of the psychology of man, and it was on their knowledge of human psychology that they based their educational system. Brahmacharya, in the most comprehensive sense of the word, was counted as an indispensable prerequisite. But the discipline and enlightenment of the vital forms no part of the modern system of education. Man is regarded as a compound of mind and body. His heart of feelings and emotions, and his vital of desires and passions, enthusiasms and realising force are completely neglected with the idea that the educated reason of man will drill them to a subservient poise—a false and facile idea which the whole history of modern education so eloquently refutes. The reason of man has failed dismally to organise man’s life and integrate his personality. Rather, it has played into the hands of the unchastened emotions and desires, and itself subserved their nefarious ends.

An unruly vital, unfettered in the indulgence of its desires and passions, has turned life into a chaos of obscure energies and rendered it miserable. It has vitiated the human mind of thought and reason, clipped the wings of its idealistic imagination, and clouded its finer sensibilities. The mental life of most men has, in consequence, been practically ruined, because it is shorn of its radiant harmony and happiness—it has become fevered, restless, brutalised, and racked with its own disorders. And the spiritual life has been, for the moment at least, almost totally eclipsed.

But what a blessing it would be to have a disciplined and cooperative vital ! “...With the collaboration of the vital no realisation seems impossible, no transformation impracticable.” The greatest dynamic personalities of the world, the pioneers and path-finders and workers in the cause of God and man, have all been endowed with a vigorous and sunny vital, which has provided an unfailing supply of energy to their minds and bodies for the accomplishment of their works. The delight that the purified vital feels in the fulfilment of a selfless task far exceeds that of the mind, for the vital is the eternal enjoyer in man’s instrumental nature.

This voluntary collaboration of the vital is, however, hard to achieve, for, though the vital is a good worker, “most often it seeks its own satisfaction. If that is refused, totally or even partially, it gets vexed, sulky, and goes on strike. As a result the energy disappears more or less completely and leaves in its place disgust for people and things, discouragement and revolt, depression and dissatisfaction.”¹

What is the remedy when such a reaction takes place in the vital ? And most of us will readily admit that it is not unoften that it takes place and proves very harassing, and even painful. The Mother suggests the following remedy: “...At these moments one must remain quiet and refuse to act ; for it is at such times that one does stupid things and in a few minutes can destroy or spoil what one has gained in months of regular effort, losing thus all the progress made.”

¹ All quotations, unless otherwise stated, have been taken from *Sri Aurobindo and The Mother on Education*.

In this connection something of what I have said in a previous chapter on the ancient system of education in India will bear repetition. In the ancient system, the instruction, example and influence of the teacher were the most potent factors in the education of the student. None could be a teacher who had not controlled himself and acquired a thorough knowledge of human psychology. Apart from the spiritual influence of the teacher, his noble life of purity, dispassion and integrity, devoted to the realisation and dissemination of high ideals, was itself a living and powerful inspiration to the student. The atmosphere in which the student lived and moved, studied and worked; the tranquil environment steeped in the true spirit of an ardent pursuit of knowledge in the midst of which he grew and blossomed; the exalted aim of life which was held up before him, and a constant concentration on which sustained his steps on his steep ascent to its realisation—these were the essential elements of his education. But modern education discounts all this. Though human mind has developed in some directions, and even struck out into new paths of self-fulfilment, human psychology remains basically the same; and a wilful ignorance of its deeper levels and hidden springs on the part of the educator is alone responsible for the cultural impasse of the present. If no provision is made for the purification and enlightenment of the vital, the student is bound to remain the unregenerate human-animal he has been since his birth, and no amount of book learning or vocational schooling, no amount of scientific knowledge and technical training, no amount of specialisation and professional efficiency can reclaim him from his ancestral animality. Rather, as I have already said, his developed intellectual powers become efficient agents of the uncouth vital and pander to its gross instincts, impulses and appetites. It is the most deplorable and pernicious defect of modern education that it has not addressed itself to the fundamental task of leading the student along the path of discipline and self-control towards character-building. It has not provided for the development of his spiritual and artistic perceptions, and the establishment of balance and harmony in him. It has contented itself with being only informative, and never sought to

be formative and illuminative. It has pursued only the vulgar objective of equipping the student with the means of "getting on", and not the lofty ideal of making of him a real man. "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man", says Sri Aurobindo. "It is man-making education all round that we want", preaches Vivekananda. "The purpose of education is the "improvement of the soul", teaches Plato. "Our ancient school system is enough. Character-building has the first place in it, and that is primary education. A building erected on that foundation will last....All our learning and recitation of the Vedas, correct knowledge, Sanskrit, Latin, Greek and what not will avail us nothing if they do not enable us to cultivate absolute purity of heart. The end of all knowledge must be building of character," says Gandhiji. "We must make the purpose of our education nothing short of the highest purpose of man, the fullest growth and freedom of the soul," declares Rabindranath. "Right education comes with the transformation of ourselves," says J.Krishnamurty. But the shapers of the policies of modern education and the wise directors of educational institutions are in no mood to listen to the wisdom of these great men to whom, however, they are never remiss in paying lip homage in glowing superlatives. They have no patience with these radical ideals, which they dismiss out of hand as utopian; for it will upset their apple cart to try to follow them. They are so much convinced of the fresh modernity of their outlook and the pragmatic practicality of their views and programmes that they do not see any necessity of reconsidering or revising them. Their chief concern is to see that their educational policies are in perfect accord with those of the West, which they admire and emulate; and to tread in its steps is the acme of their ambition, and the justification of all their activities. They fight shy of any revolutionary departure in the theory and practice of education, which a harking back to the counsels of men of spiritual vision or to the wisdom of the ancients would involve. But the very purpose of education will continue to be defeated and the products of education will continue to be flawed and frail, or wanton and wild, so long as the vital of the students is not properly educated and enlightened.

How to deal with the vital ? How to educate and enlighten it ?

An unruly *prāṇa* should be treated like a refractory child, with patience, persevering care, and perceptive forbearance. It has to be shown the truth of its essential nature, it has to be shown the light of knowledge. No doubt, it is a delicate and difficult work, entailing, as it does, frequent set-backs and sudden explosions; but a calm patience and persistent endeavour are sure to succeed in the end, and the failures prove to be but stepping stones to the final achievement. A more detailed exposition of the Mother's teaching on this important part of education will be given in a later chapter.

Then the physical part of our composite being, I mean the body, has to be educated and trained to become a strong and efficient instrument for the self-expression of our central being in terms of the outer life of action. The Mother attaches great importance to physical education. If the physical consciousness of man is not lit up with the inner light and attuned to the inner harmony, if the body is weak and ailing, or obtuse and inapt, and awkward in its movements, the self-expression of the soul in the material world will be disfigured and crippled—the soul's light will be engulfed in the physical obscurity. The Mother has a very high opinion of the capacities and potentialities of the body. It was an ignorance of these powers and potentialities of the body and of its essential nature that led most of the spiritual seekers in the East and the West to treat it with scorn. The Hathayogis in India and the Alchemists tried to explore its potentialities, but they never had any idea of developing and utilising them for the purpose of any divine action in the material world. It is only after an intensive and thorough exploration of the essence and the latent powers of the body¹ that the Mother declares that it has a divine destiny and a divine purpose to fulfil.

“The body must not rule, it has to obey. By its very nature it is a docile and faithful servant. Unfortunately it has not often the capacity of discernment with regard to its masters, the mind

¹ Some of these explorations are recorded in “*The Prayers and Meditations of The Mother*”.

and the vital. It obeys them blindly, at the cost of its own well-being. The mind with its dogmas, its rigid and arbitrary principles," (often enforced by fanatical moralists, and with disastrous results) "the vital with its passions, its excesses and dissipations soon do everything to destroy the natural balance of the body and create in it fatigue, exhaustion and disease." If we develop an inner discernment, we shall see to our horror how our mind with its foolish fads and mistaken principles and ideas, and how our vital with its blind impulses and ravaging hungers, tyrannise over the body, a dumb and docile instrument, and impose upon it conditions that stifle its healthy growth and force it to do the very things which sap its strength and throw it out of gear. But the effects of the tyranny do not take long to recoil upon the tyrants themselves—they, the mind and the vital, have to suffer no less in consequence of the breakdown and suffering of the body.

This is, indeed, the common lot of men. Hardly anybody pauses to think that the body is an organ which has its own inherent law of metabolism and its own rhythm of growth and self-expression, and that it must be allowed a certain autonomy in the ordering of its life and functions. It must be liberated from the crass tyranny of the mind and the vital. "...That can be done", says the Mother, "only through a constant union with the psychic centre (the soul) of the being." "The body has a wonderful capacity of endurance and adaptation. It is fit to do so many more things than one can usually imagine. If, instead of the ignorant and despotic masters that govern it, it is ruled by the central truth of the being, one will be surprised at what it is capable of doing. Calm and quiet, strong and poised, it will at every minute put forth the effort that is demanded of it, for it will have learnt to find rest in action, to replace through contact with the universal forces the energies it spends consciously and usefully." Even Science with its far-flung vision of material conquest cannot imagine what marvellous potentialities lie embedded in this tiny tabernacle of mortal clay. But for the actualisation of those potentialities it is not material devices or mental recipes that will avail, it is the direct action of the soul, which is infallible in its

clairvoyance. The discovery of the soul becomes then a primal and primary object of an integral education.

The body's powers and possibilities are not confined to an optimum efficiency of its native energies. It has a higher spectrum of self-expression, even beyond the orbit of those possibilities, an ampler rôle to play. "In this sound and balanced life a new harmony will manifest in the body, reflecting the harmony of the higher regions which will give it the perfect proportions and the ideal beauty of form. And this harmony will be progressive, for the truth of the being is never static, it is a continual unfolding of a growing, a more and more global and comprehensive perfection." And, it is well to point out, this perfection will refuse to be clamped down to what Science postulates as the Laws of Nature : it will override and transcend them in a magnificent upsurge of its spiritual powers, enriched and upheld by the powers of the higher domains of the Spirit. What is actual in it is grossly and superficially real, which Science swears by; what is latent in it is subtle and intangible, which is known to the Hathayogi and partly to the advanced psychologist; but what is causal has not yet been discovered and explored. When that is explored and exploited, the body will reveal itself as a crystalline temple of the self-manifesting Spirit. "As soon as the body learns to follow the movement of a progressive harmony, it will be possible for it, through a continuous process of transformation, to escape the necessity of disintegration and destruction. Thus the irrevocable law of death will have no reason for existing any more."

The immortality of the body which the Mother prophesies—and also promises—will be fundamentally different from the physical immortality which Science dreams of achieving by material means. It will be different from the physical immortality which the Hathayogi and the Alchemist sought to bring about by a full development of the abundant potentials of the body and the life-force, and holding them secure only in conditions of meditative silence and seclusion. The physical immortality which the Mother speaks of will be the crystallisation of the Spirit-substance itself in the corporeal frame, and the radiant precipitate in Matter of the transformed consciousness and psychology of

the whole being, full of creative will and energy for world-action, and invulnerable to the forces of decay and disintegration. It will mean the irradiation of the very cells of the body and their transmutation,—in effect, a radical trans-substantiation, and a spiritualisation of the currents of life-energy and the very rhythms of their dynamic and operation. But more about it later on.

“As we rise to this degree of perfection which is our goal, we shall perceive that the truth we seek is made up of four major aspects : Love, Knowledge, Power and Beauty. These four attributes of the Truth will spontaneously express themselves in our being. The psychic will be the vehicle of true and pure love, the mind that of infallible knowledge, the vital will manifest an invincible power and strength and the body will be the expression of a perfect beauty and a perfect harmony.”

The vast and resplendent panorama of human perfection the Mother's scheme of integral education opens up before our eyes may appear too strangely sublime to be true. But truth is stranger than fiction. For, Truth is the creative vision and norm of the Eternal and Infinite, sovereignly capable of creating its own conditions for self-manifestation, and supplanting all the laws of a lower order of Nature; whereas fiction is only a fledgling of human fancy, beating its fragile wings within the petty circles of human dreams and perceptions.

This, in short, is a bare outline of the Mother's scheme of integral education. I shall now try an exposition of its different aspects and their convergent and cooperative action.

(To be continued)

RISHABHCHAND

LOGIC OF ADVAITA

THE philosophy of Advaita Vedanta has been expounded in many luminous ways by scholars, ancient and modern. It has been claimed to be the philosophy of Intuition or mystical oneness. Though it is primarily such, yet it has been shewn that this is capable of being arrived at as the logical culmination of the method of 'negation' of all empirical categories of knowledge, including subject and object though not its result which would have turned out to be without this intuitional realisation of Absolute Reality just a grand negation (*śūnya*). I have attempted elsewhere to show that Advaita is an intellectual philosophy though it takes umbrage under intuition ultimately.

In this paper it is my endeavour to show that method of negation (Upaniṣadically said to have been derived from the classic method of *neti neti*—not this, not this).

Taking the concept of *pramāṇas*, Advaita shows that there are degrees of truth though Reality is one only. The degrees are hierarchically arranged so that the higher *pramāṇa* would sublate or contradict and annul the lower. Thus perception is sublated by inference, and *anumāna* will be sublated by *śabda*. The ideal of knowledge is *abdhāhitajñān* or uncontradicted knowledge. Even in respect of *śabda* or scriptural testimony, the dualistic texts are said to be sublated by the non-dualistic or monistic texts. The monistic texts are said to be *mahāvākyas* or great sentences which are not contradicted by any other superior texts. The knowledge arising from these texts is final and ultimate.

This leads us to consider the *prameya* or object of knowledge or Reality. Here consequent on the fixing up of the hierarchy of *pramāṇa* there results the fixing up of the hierarchy of Reality or degrees of Reality. Here again the objects of dream are sublated by the objects of waking consciousness and these in turn will be sublated by the objects of the *śabda* or Brahman. The world which is the object of sense perception is an illusion or becomes

an illusion the moment the Supreme Brahman is realised by *śruti-jaya jñāna*. The Ultimate Reality is Brahman, the One Being.

The problem then is the reconciliation of the two basic experiences : one delivered by sense and reason and analogy and the other delivered by *śruti*. How Brahman who is described as One, Eternal, Infinite, Unchanging, Unqualified, Consciousness, Existence and Bliss in *Śruti* appears as the Many, Changing, Finite, Divisible, Qualified, Unintelligent, non-existence and misery—in one word as the Contrary of Brahman (*abhāva of Brahman*)? This is the primary problem. This problem thus focusses the logical issue of Contradiction between Brahman and His opposite.

Advaita holds that the Brahman appears as its opposite due to *māyā*, *avidyā*, *karma*, all of which conceived as one or two or three. These three entities generally grouped under the one term *avidyā* or ignorance make the Brahman's *abhāva* so to speak appear on Brahman, veiling Brahman's nature (*sat-cit-ānanda* and revealing *asat*, *acit*, and *an-ānanda*, as if they belong to Brahman or are Brahman.

The analogy most helpful to understanding this is that of *jabākusuma*'s red colour passing through a colourless crystal, and making the crystal appear red. Brahman is the crystal, *jabākusum* is equivalent to *māyā-vidyā* or the negation of Brahman—a polar opposite and the characteristics of this *abhāva* appear as if in Brahman, shrouding the nature of Brahman—a shrouding or *tirodhana* or *adhyāsa* which is 'logical' because the opposite or the *abhāva* and *bhāva* cannot but cancel each other.

It is also to be presumed that this is also a case of *viparīta* or perversion in so far as the *abhāva* of Brahman appears on *bhāva* of Brahman, that is, the *abhāva* has under certain circumstances (as in the case of the rope appearing as a snake or a non-existent image appearing as existent as in hallucination) the 'power' or in fact does appear as *bhāva*. Thus the illusion is not due to seeing something other than what it is but seeing the non-existent opposite as existent. Whilst in the first case it was just *akhyāti*, the process has led to *viparīta-khyāti*, the perception of the non-existent opposite or contradictory as existent. It is also

anirvacanīya khyāti or inexpressible either as existent or non-existent, though it is not absolute *śūnya*.

This concept is in one sense a little different from the identity-difference views.

Let us examine the whole fabric of this logic in order to appreciate the technique of discovery or explanation.

The *bhāva* (*brahman*) is described as follows : we shall enter in the corresponding opposite side the contradictory of it or its *abhāva*.

i)	Brahman is One	opposite of it (<i>abhāva</i>)	Many
ii)	<i>nirguṇam</i>		<i>saguṇam</i>
iii)	<i>sat</i>		<i>asat</i>
iv)	<i>cit</i>		<i>acit</i>
v)	<i>ānanda</i>		<i>duḥkha</i>
vi)	<i>atīndriya</i>		<i>īndriyārtha</i>
vii)	<i>nirākāra</i>		<i>sākāra</i>
viii)	<i>nirmala</i>		<i>mala</i>
ix)	<i>ātma</i>		<i>anātma</i>

The *abhāva* appears as *bhāva* as the real *bhāva* or Brahman because of the logical implication of all *abhāva* in all *bhāva*. Since every affirmative proposition can be expressed in a negative way and since this obversion conveys the same meaning, it gives rise to the other illusion or error of conceiving negation as implicated in and in a sense capable of being used as to define existence by its opposite. This is similar to the western Hegelian view that thought proceeds from affirmation to its opposite implicated logically or necessarily and then proceeds again to a new affirmation and so on. This dialectical movement of opposites in discussion later was converted into a process of evolutionary dialectic. Shankara utilised it in a more general way to include even perceptual as the opposite of the conceptual. Therefore it is called a peculiar power of making the opposite appear in the real, or *māyā* which is logical actually and a matter of thought-construction in dialectical opposition, a *vikalpa* and a *vivarata* of Being and its nature.

Since it is thought that makes this negation to appear, thought itself is the falsifying factor. The transcendence of thought is what is called for for getting rid of this illusion.

But to proceed with the potentialities of negation of *bhāva* or the logical contradictory to Being or Brahman, we can see that Advaita has been forced to create a realm of appearance (of Negation) of Brahman, so much so we found that in respect of God Brahman appears as if attributed by qualities which are opposed to its own Unqualified-nature, in respect of individual souls, it appears as if many and ignorant and limited, and in respect of Nature it appears as if it is inconscient and infinitely divisible, and in respect of time, it is timeless, and so on. Later Advaitins have postulated that there are three types of veilings by these entities (*abhāva* of Brahman or its contradictories so to speak) much so the pure or *sattva*, only creates the illusion of God, and can be known as *Maya*, that *rajas* again creates the illusion of souls, and it is known as *avidyā*, and *tamas* creates the illusion of Nature and it is known as *karma avidyā* the totality of these three is *adhyāsa* of Brahman.

It is well known that the term *avidyā* is within limits to be reckoned as *vidyetara*, other than *vidyā*, and refers to *karma*. But when the negative begins to embrace a much wider area then we get into enlarging the area of negation and thus we arrive at the fecundity principle of Negation of Being. Brahman is One only and indeed the Advaita thinkers refuse to accept that the terms applied to Brahman are qualities at all because they refer to the substance and qualities are other than substance and as such fall within the area of negation. Thus logical disjunction has been extended to involve illusion and thus intellect has been shown to be essentially a Logic of the Negative.

Transcendence then of this intellect is the only method of arriving at Reality. All thought is riddled with the logic of the negative. It is only when the intellect is withdrawn that reality begins to lose its negative appearance or rather the appearance of the negative on it and we go beyond the illusion of the intellect.

In any case it is clear that the *Māyāvāda* Advaita makes a gallant attempt to reveal the limits of intellect, by defining the

negative side of Brahman and deny it of Brahman, and affirm that the knowledge of the real nature of *avidyā* is to get over the illusion, that the negation of Brahman as appearance belongs to Brahman or is Brahma. The view sketched above is open to serious objections. Can the illusion of residence of Negation of Brahman ever reside in or arise from or appear on Brahman which is pure Knowledge? (This criticism was raised by Sri Ramanuja in his famous Sri Bhasya). As an empirical fact it cannot but as a logical implication it can be assumed and subordinated to Brahman under certain conditions. But why should this negative become so dominant as to veil altogether Brahman, and become dominant in Brahman which is ever dominant and changeless and the analogy of snake-rope illusion cannot be applied at all. It is just possible that the negation (*abhāva*) is perceptual and can appear more clear than the concept but this is impossible for we have seen that it is negation that is conceptual implication of being and it is not a perceptual experience. It is however likely that it may be argued that the Real is neither perceptual nor conceptual both of which belong to the *abhāva* of Brahman but transcendent to both and sublating them. That may likely be the meaning of inexpressibility but unfortunately this is not a position canvassed at all by the logicians of Advaita.

ii) The second criticism put in the form of a question is

Is the logical illusion at all possible, as it requires another cause to establish it? This would fairly lead to infinite regress.

iii) Is the logical illusion capable of veiling the nature of Brahman in such a way as to create the illusion of divisibility, diversity, finitude and mortality?

iv) If the logical illusion is capable of doing it then the problem of release or freedom from it is impossible.

More than all these the question of questions is whether there is any *pramāṇa* or method and means of knowing this logical process of Illusion or establishing the ideal-illusion of the logical-opposite of Brahman.

The concept of power of illusion for this logical-*abhāva* or contradictory or polar-opposite cannot be certainly referred to the *abhāva* or non-existence nor can the fecundity now referred to it

be ever satisfactory. Whilst real existence alone can have power, it is seen that this power is transferred to non-existence—a position analogous to that of Buddhistic Nihilism. Further, if the Real is said to have Being and the unreal is to be equated with non-being, it is seen that the non-being develops a fecundity of appearances which are contradictory of all non-being itself. Thus the real logical alternatives are not Real and the negative but Being and its negative.

The approach to the definition of Brahman or its apprehension if definition is something that is said to limit the unconditioned, is only through a series of negations of known limitations, and thus it is Being that is being defined in terms of negation of non-being. This is certainly incapable of leading up to an apprehension of the Brahman in terms of the known. The Unknown is sought to be arrived at by denying the known. This is not a method that can fairly be said to be a process of *jñāna* or knowing at all, the arrival at the state of transcendence of knowing, known and knower is yet to be considered to be a process of knowledge.

The logic of the negative, which is used in a limited way in the Upanishad, proceeding a series or steps of the ladder of complete explanation or series of hypotheses about reality, cannot be so wholesalely applied as to make all the steps of the ladder utterly unreal. Indeed the total hypotheses must be capable of explaining the lower steps much better than what they could the higher steps.

The comparison of this logic of the Negative with the dialectical process of Hegel, is not possible for the non-being as the polar opposite of the being is a *real* moment in the dialectical triad of being-non-being and becoming. Though logically it is said to be an 'ideal' passage of thought from being to non-being and becoming, in a theory of evolutionary synthesis which is also Hegelian, the moments are real moments and not unreal at all. Thus the dialectic of Hegel appropriately posits the opposite of existence to elicit change or becoming, and should we consider that it is but the appearance of non-being (*abhāva*) of being on being. The Marxian dialectic rightly considered that the non-being is not barren non-being but a power of non-being that

impels a change in being and makes it come to terms with it.

In Advaita logic of the negative this is not what is done. The logical opposite is barren however when it is the opposite of a Totality, but it can be fecund if it is in respect of particular objects. The particular objects, qualities, subjects etc., are all in Advaita of the non-being (of the Totality or the All), and therefore negation refuses to be really helpful except in reaching a grand Nihil or Nothing. Therefore it is that Mayavada basing itself on the *abhāva* of Brahman (totality or transcendence) cannot but be unproved and is unintelligible.

The negation of Brahman, the Absolute can never be made to appear at all. Here also there is a way open to Hegelians who start not with the Ultimate Absolute as being but rather achieve it at the end as the grand Synthesis—the perfectly fulfilled and fulfilling Absolute or System or Reality. This however is not available to Mayavada Absolutism as Brahman being partless and changeless cannot produce its own opposite against which it is a constant rejection.

Thus it follows that the value of the approach from the side of negation of the known towards the unknown is seductive and elusive. The exploitation of the 'neti neti' passages in the Upanishad does not lead to the positing or apprehension of an absolute that negatives *all* attributes but only those that are negated and has positive attributes affirmed of it. The logic of negation can lead to self-contradictions too.

Intellectual logic that works on the basis of dichotomy and negation can never lead to the concept of transcendence at all and does not even lead to positively real relativism.

Intuition logic or necessity does not therefore conform to the pattern of the negational logic of dichotomy and illusion.

Shankara's logic is not intuition logic; it is intellectual and commits suicide truly and cannot lead to intuition even. The Upanishadic Shruti has therefore to be approached in a different manner and by a different logic.

K. C. VARADACHARI

SRI AUROBINDO LITERATURE (X)

THE WAY OF LOVE

LOVE is the easiest key to open the Gates of the Divine. This is a love that wells up spontaneously from the depths of of the heart, oozes out from every pore of the body at the very thought of the Divine Beloved. It is a love which is very different from what we call by the same name in human relationships. What passes for love in the ordinary world is really no love at all but a mixture of desire and self-interest masquerading under the emotional cover of attachment, affection, love. Its root is ego and the moment its expected return fails to come there is a revolt; love is on its way to turn into hate. The love that we speak of in Yoga is totally different. And there too usually it is not there in the beginning but comes as a culmination of the movement of devotion, Bhakti.

Even Bhakti, says the Scripture, is not always an unmixed offering of the emotions to the Divine. There is a Bhakti of appeal for succour from distress, *ārta*; there is a Bhakti propelled by desire seeking its fulfilment from the Divine, *arthārthī*; there is a Bhakti which is a form of the thirst for knowledge of the Divine who attracts but is still Unknown, the Bhakti of the *jijñāsu*. There is also a Bhakti which is the result of Knowledge, *jñānam*, that the Divine is the Sole Lord of All. Whatever the nature of the initial Bhakti, it should be taken as a starting point and an effort made to gradually cleanse its content, purge it of its grosser motives and turn it more and more into purer channels leading towards selfless love. In this the seeker is helped by the very nature of Bhakti which whatever its original motive, apparent or real, comes into its own as it grows in his being and lands him repeatedly on high points of utter gratitude, pure love and clean aspiration, all of which are doors of entry into the real Way of Love.

The first movement of Bhakti is one of *adoration*. Usually this takes the form of some kind of external worship of the adored. The devotee tends to express his feeling of submission and reverence through physical means which is natural to a mind that normally dwells in the world of the physical senses. This worship has indeed its preparatory value. But to be truly effective in opening a way of contact and communication with the Divine who is worshipped this outer mode of attendance must correspond to an inner feeling, a glad movement of surrender, a dependence felt within. The outer should be a means of expression, a support for the growth of an *inner adoration*. The inner gives life to the outer.

With the birth of this inner adoration Yoga may be said to begin in right earnest. An inner life begins to take shape. The sense of submission and waiting upon the Divine with devotion—implied in the act of adoration—has certain practical consequences. There is an automatic action to keep the temple of one's being clean for the Divine. Thoughts and feelings turn into movements of seeking and prayer. The external life too comes to be moulded in tune with this inner ordering.

There grows an effortless *consecration* to the Divine who is sought for. And a necessary part of this consecration is self-purification. It is a purification within: a relentless elimination of all that is contrary to the spirit of one's central endeavour and abstention from contacts, physical, mental or vital, which tend to draw away from or contaminate in their results the purity of the seeking, the soulful tenderness and receptive expectancy which draws the Divine to reveal itself to the seeker.

All the faculties of the mind, its thought, will, imagination, are turned towards the Divine. The mind is gradually orientated towards the Divine on the wings of the heart's love. Once smitten with Love for the Supreme Beloved, the mind loses interest in the objects that held its attention before and turns to centre itself round the Divine. Till that stage is reached, one may initially take the help of an Image or a Name to gather the energies of the mind and focus them on the Object of the seeking. Once the mind is trained to so concentrate itself the image or the name

gradually melt into the Reality, the Divine Personality they stand for and the consciousness of the seeker is engulfed in the Revelation. There is also the well known process of hearing the glories of the Divine, *śravaṇam*, constant thinking of them and of Him whom they celebrate, *mananam*, and the settling of the mind on the Divine who is so adored, *dhyāna*. When this last condition deepens the consciousness passes into an ecstatic trance, *samādhi*, in which the individual completely loses himself in the Object of his adoration.

Sri Aurobindo draws attention to the distinction between this Samadhi of the God-lover and the Samadhi of the discriminating Jnanin. The Bhakta's is an ecstatic experience, not the still and silent contemplation of the Jnanin of the Way of Knowledge. Here one does not pass into the Being of the Supreme but calls the Divine into oneself. Not peace of unity but bliss of union is the crown in the Way of Love.

Not only consecration of the mind but consecration of the body also. All outpourings of the will and energy are offered to the Divine. Here too there is a difference between the methods of dedication in the path of Bhakti and in the Path of Works. In the latter it is the individual will that is taught to tune itself to the Higher Will of the Divine. The fulcrum is the will. But here in the way of Devotion the motive-spring is love. Love is the dominant force which turns all action flowing towards the Divine as its dynamic outreaching. Work becomes at once a means for the expansion of love and a channel for the expression of love for the Divine in His manifold Becoming.

Thus does Bhakti, starting from whatever motive, gradually gather strength, shed its earthy dross and acquire the character of heavenly love which ever glows in the deepest centre of man, his psychic being. Sri Aurobindo enjoins upon the seeker to try and awaken this psychic element in him so as to bring into operation its natural power of love which when it comes into its own, can alone by itself burn away the impediments and heal the imperfections in his nature. And Love has this supreme power, for in its pristine nature, it is the most divine dynamis in creation. It is, we may say, the yearning of the Divine

in the individual form towards its Source, the Parent Divine Above. When the veils that cover it are removed and it is allowed to come to the front, there is no withstanding its imperious surge. From a spark it grows into a flame setting the whole being on fire for union with the Divine.

For the seeker of the Integral Yoga it is indeed not enough to realise this truth of love and union in his psychic depths alone. The union in love is to be realised in his other parts as well. They too have a secret aspiration and intention to participate in the bliss of union and contribute their characteristic powers in manifestation to add to the varied delight of the Union. The vital has a dynamic role to play; especially the higher vital with its large capacities for self-giving, heroism and mighty effectuations. The physical body too has its elements of stability and beauty to serve in the foundations of a moving Temple of Love Divine.

M. P. PANDIT

REVIEWS

Spiritual Experiences *By Swami Shivananda.* Pub. Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy, Rishikesh. Pp. 352, Price Rs. 4.00.

“An American student was possessed of intense religious faith and aspiration. Though well-read in the sacred scriptures of the world, especially those of the Hindus, he knew that this intellectual knowledge was barren and stony; it did not feed the soul-hunger within him....Under the even tenor of his days there yawned a black abyss of despair.... Into this dark night of his soul came the dazzling light brought by the teacher from India. The student felt the heavy weight of despair lifting from his heart. Returning to his home one night from the last of the public lectures, he was conscious of a great peace within himself. He felt that in some deep fundamental way he had become a different person. An impulse urged him to look into a mirror in his room that he might see a new man. There he saw not his own face, but the face of the Hindu teacher....The floodgate of joy broke in his soul; he was inundated with waves of indescribable ecstasy. Words that had been merely words to him before—bliss, immortality, eternity, truth, divine love—became, in the twinkling of an eye, the core of his being, the essence of his life, the only possible reality....He knew not with his mind alone, but with his heart and soul, with every cell and molecule of his body. The sublime splendour and joy of this discovery were so vast that he felt that centuries, millenniums, countless aeons of suffering were as nothing, as less than nothing, if by such means that bliss could be obtained. Sin, sorrow, death—these were but words now, words without meaning, words swallowed up by joy as minnows by the seven seas.

He was aware, during this first period of illumination and during the months which followed, of a number of physiological changes within himself. The most striking was what seemed an arrangement of molecular structure in his brain or the opening up of new cell-territory there. Ceaselessly, day and night, he was conscious of this work going on. It seemed as though a kind of electrical drill was boring out new cellular thought-channels....

Another important change was felt in his spinal column. The whole spine seemed turned into iron for several months, so that, when he sat to meditate on God, he felt anchored for ever, able to sit in one place eternally without motion or consciousness of any bodily function. At times an influx of superhuman strength invaded him and he felt that he was carrying the whole universe on his shoulders. The elixir of life, the nectar of immortality, he felt flowing in his veins as an actual, tangible force. It seemed like a quicksilver or a sort of electrical fluid light throughout his body."

This is one of the striking experiences cited by Swami Shivananda in this informative book while discussing the nature of the indispensable changes in consciousness that are undergone in the Yoga-process. For in any Yoga directed towards spiritual ends, it is the change of consciousness that is of paramount importance. Whether by meditation and concentration or by devotion and Upasana or by one-minded dedication of works to the Lord, the central aim of the seeker is to outgrow his limited human consciousness tied to the senses and develop into larger and larger or deeper and still deeper ranges of consciousness passing into the spiritual. There is the crux. As the author points out, 'The Kingdom of God is not a place, but a state of consciousness.'

After describing the nature of the consciousness of man in all its statuses and the possibility of becoming aware of them and living in them by yogic effort, the author speaks of the experiences that usually come to the seeker in meditation. First there are the lights of various colours that one sees; they are 'Tanmatric lights. Every Tattva has its own hue. Prithivi tattva has yellow

colour; Ap tattva has white colour; Agni has red colour; Vayu has green colour; Akasa has blue colour.' To put it in another way lights of different hues correspond to different Powers active in Creation and their vision testifies to the active presence of the Powers in the being of the seer.

The hearing of different sounds is another phenomenon which is experienced by many though not by all. This *nāda* is traditionally spoken of as of ten kinds : 'The first is Chini (like the sound of the word Chini); the second is Chini-Chini; the third is the sound of bell; the fourth is that of conch; the fifth is that of Tantri (lute); the sixth is that sound of Tala (cymbals); the seventh is that of flute; the eighth is that of Bheri (drum); the ninth is that of Mridanga (double drum) and the tenth is that of clouds, viz., thunder.'

Regarding both the kinds of experiences mentioned above we must note that they are not necessarily experienced by all. They are in fact movements on the subtler planes and only those whose subtle sight and subtle hearing have opened experience them. Many can and often do go on without any of them. Besides, these phenomena do not always indicate spiritual growth. They are signposts of entry into the subtler worlds. What are most important and truly indicative of progress in the sadhana are the descent of peace in the being, specially in the head region, and the flow of joy, a natural delight which wells up within the heart without any ostensible outer cause. It is a sure mark of progression into the deeper or higher life when one begins to feel this calm, peace and happiness, first during the periods of meditation and then gradually prolonging into other hours also. Inevitably, in meditation, there is a withdrawal, partial at first and fuller later, of the consciousness from the usual preoccupation with the outer life and its inner fringes. And as the consciousness frees itself from the bounds of the physical body there is a tendency to expand, to go upward and this gives rise to the phenomenon to which the author refers viz. feeling of rising up or expansion, disappearance of the sense of the body and awareness of only a big head in the sky etc.

He refers to the frequently experienced 'jerks' during medita-

tion and explains them as 'due to sudden muscular contraction from new Pranic influence, new nerve stimuli' (on the formation of new nerve currents following the purification of Nadis). We would add that these jerks are also caused due to sudden come-back to the physical consciousness in the body from the subtler levels where one moves during meditation or meditative sleep. When there is such a quick transition one gets these jolts and jerks; the remedy is to increase one's power of self-awareness and self-control and cultivate the habit of a slow, measured movement of the mind and Prana.

There is a whole chapter devoted to the subject of 'psychic powers' that are known to manifest in some way or other in the course of the Yoga. They include the famous eight Powers, *aṣṭa siddhis* : *aṇimā*, power of becoming as minute as one chooses, *mahimā*, power of becoming large, *laghimā*, power of making oneself as light as cotton or feather, *garimā*, power of becoming heavy, *prāpti*, power of attaining what one wishes, *prākāmya*, power to acquire what one desires, *vaśitvam*, power of bringing anything under control and *iśitvam*, lordship over what one wills. The author refers to many other kinds of powers or siddhis e.g. entry into the minds and bodies of others, materialisation and dematerialisation etc., and counsels the seeker to beware of them, as they are so many decoys to tempt the aspirant away from the Godward path. Much has been said on this subject and good deal of loud alarm raised on the use of what are called 'supernatural powers'. It is time we took a rational view of the whole matter. After all, as Sri Aurobindo points out, these powers are nothing but latent faculties in man which are awakened under certain conditions, under particular stresses of consciousness. If to our normal state of consciousness they are abnormal, they are certainly normal to the state of consciousness in which they get active. And so long as one is in that different status of consciousness no Shastra or injunction can prevent their function being natural to him. And what is so normal cannot be unspiritual. If one is sincere to the Call, no extent of exercise of the 'supernatural' powers can succeed in deviating the sadhana. It is only if there be an insincerity in the being, a secret desire or ambition to show off, become great

etc. that these powers can become the occasion for departure from the Path. The warning should be against the *misuse*, not the just use of the powers. To quote Sri Aurobindo's reply to a question on the point :

"The idea that Yogins do not or ought not to use these powers I regard as an ascetic superstition. I believe that all Yogins who have these powers do use them whenever they find that they are called on from within to do so. They may refrain if they think the use in a particular case is contrary to the Divine Will or see that preventing one evil may be opening the door to worse or for any other valid reason, but not from any general prohibitory rule. What is forbidden to anyone with a strong spiritual sense is to be a miracle-monger, performing extraordinary things for show, for gain, for fame out of vanity or pride....As for those who can live in the true Divine Consciousness, certain powers are not powers at all in that sense, not, that is to say, supernatural or abnormal, but rather their normal way of seeing and acting, part of the consciousness—and how can they be forbidden or refuse to act according to their consciousness and its nature ?"

There are a number of other topics in this treatise. But they relate mostly to the process and developments in Raja Yoga which is the one Yoga most exhaustively dealt with in the writings of Swamiji. There is little here of the experiences vouchsafed in the Way of Love though there are a few pages devoted to the Christian Mystics of Europe and the Nayanars of South India. So too, there is practically nothing on the milestones on the Way of Works. A separate volume is called for thereon. Be that as it may, the one fundamental truth on which all the discussions in this book converge is the necessity of change of consciousness, the imperative need for the growth of the present limited human consciousness into a wider, higher and deeper quality of Consciousness which alone can change ordinary human life into the divine. If that is done most of the problems that beset man today in his world of ignorance and suffering will lose their edge and become

shadows of a receding past. The author draws attention to the remarkable pronouncements of Dr. M. Bucke on what he called the advent of the Cosmic Consciousness :

“In contact with the flux of cosmic Consciousness all religions known and named today will be melted down. The human soul will be revolutionised. Religion will absolutely dominate the race...It will not be in sacred books nor in the mouths of priests...It will not teach a future immortality nor future glories, for immortality and all glory exist in the here and now. The evidence of immortality will live in every heart as sight in every eye. Doubt of God and of eternal life will be as impossible as is now doubt of existence...Churches, priests, forms, creeds, prayers, all agents, all intermediaries between the individual men and God will be permanently replaced by direct unmistakable intercourse...Each soul will feel and know itself to be immortal, will feel and know that the entire universe with all its good and with all its beauty is for it and belongs to it for ever. The world peopled by men possessing Cosmic Consciousness will be as far removed from the world of today as this from the world as it was before the advent of self-consciousness. This new race is in the act of being born from us and in the near future will occupy and possess the earth.”

So far so good. But for a real and total transformation of human nature into the divine even the attainment of the cosmic consciousness is not enough. For while the cosmic consciousness undoubtedly frees the individual into a wider unlimited universal range, he is still in the triple reign of Ignorance. He has to get beyond it in his consciousness. And for that he needs must grow into the Transcendent Consciousness of Vijnana that stands above the lower hemisphere of existence, at the head of Creation—the Power and Consciousness of the Supramental.

M. P. PANDIT

II

The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, by *Prof. Ramnath Sharma*, M.A. Publishers—Bharati Prakashan Mandir, Kashi Sadan, Pandariba, Lucknow. Price Rs. 12.50

The distinctive feature of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is this that it is a luminous body of spiritual knowledge born out of spiritual experience, vision and realisation. It is essentially different from mental or intellectual philosophies. Hence, while dealing with Sri Aurobindo's philosophy we should remember that it is not an intellectual interpretation of life and reality, though the intellect has been fully made use of in giving a systematic form to his spiritual experiences. Sri Aurobindo is not a speculative thinker but a spiritual master and seer. As to the origin of his philosophy, in a significant letter he writes, "When I wrote in the *Arya* I was setting forth an Overmind view of things to the mind and putting it in mental terms, that was why I had sometimes to use logic. For in such a work—mediating between the intellect and the supra-intellectual—logic has a place though it cannot have the chief place it occupies in purely mental philosophies." It is, therefore, obvious that the sources of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy are extralogical or supra-logical, and logic and thought have been made the mediators, 'the Paraclete' between the luminous regions above and the dark planes below.

It is heartening to note that Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is now gaining ascendancy both in India as well as abroad. Prof. Sharma's *Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*—the book under review, forming a part of his doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Allahabad—is a clear pointer to this fact. The author touches upon the main aspects of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy—the theory of knowledge, the theory of the Absolute and the individual, the doctrine of spiritual evolution, the idea of the Supermind, the appearance of Gnostic Being etc. and takes pains to discover the comprehensive and integral vision underlying these

philosophical concepts. The book contains as many as eleven chapters... Knowledge and Truth, Methods, Absolute and God, Self and Individual, World and Creation, Evolution, Religious experience, Integral Yoga and Human Evolution etc. The author shows a good deal of insight in handling some of the very hackneyed and traditional problems of philosophy and suggests a possible solution in the light of Sri Aurobindo's integral teaching. One of the chief merits of the book is this that it shows the wide, catholic and all-inclusive character of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy which, in fact, gives due importance to various stand-points and rejects none. The chapter on "Methods" seems to have broken fresh grounds in the exposition of Sri Aurobindo's epistemology in relation to that of the Indian and Western thinkers. The exposition has been simple, direct and lucid although at places it is too 'scholastic', perhaps natural to an academic thesis. On the whole the work has been a good contribution to the available literature on Sri Aurobindo.

The value of the book has been much enhanced by a well-written foreword from the pen of Dr. Indra Sen. We heartily commend the book to all students of Sri Aurobindo at the university level.

PRAPATTI

III

Sraddha ke Phul (Hindi), by *Harishchandra*, published by Sadhana Mandir, Hansi (Hissar) Pp. 114, Price Rs. 1.25.

Blossoms of Faith is a happy rosary of 108 Thoughts and Meditations of a cultured mind soaring into the larger horizons of the Spirit in the Universe around. The author perceives every object in Creation as a manifestation of the Divine and calls upon man to establish right relations with each and All upon the basis of this inner Oneness. That is his real Sadhana and Dharma

—duty to God. Sri Harishchandra touches upon many topics that are relevant to the modern age viz. Nationalism, Democracy, Materialism, Religion etc. and throws the light of the Soul, that he has gained, on their true value and significance for the godward growth of man. To quote a few of his observations :

Look first to the foundations and not to the crown of the edifice.

In your zeal to protect the body do not stifle the soul (of India).

I seek liberation, but liberation into the world, not beyond.

The style chosen is simple but elegant prose with swift turns of thought adding to the appeal of this spontaneous writing.

M.P.P.